Nova Scotia's Nursing Strategy Update 2004

PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE

A Brighter Future— The Power of Collaboration

By Barb Oke, Nursing Policy Advisor

"Nurses are coming up with strategies and we're seeing results ... The network has representatives from all areas of nursing and their input is acted upon through the nursing strategy." **Sara Campbell Nurse, IWK**

Nova Scotia is fortunate to have highly skilled registered nurses and licensed practical nurses who are committed to providing the best possible nursing care.

Since being introduced in 2001, Nova Scotia's Nursing Strategy continues to demonstrate success in improving the recruitment, retention, and work life of nurses in Nova Scotia. With an annual investment of $10 million for the Nursing Strategy and nursing education, we continue to see positive trends. The overall number of employed nurses is higher, more nurses work in permanent rather than casual positions, and we are retaining over 80 per cent of our new graduates, most of whom found full-time employment.

The Provincial Nursing Network and its working groups continue to provide leadership and advice on nursing issues to the Department of Health. I would like to thank past and present members for their time, expertise, and commitment to nursing and quality care.

I truly believe that our multi-stakeholder approach is what has made us so successful. Nova Scotia's Nursing Strategy was developed "by nurses, for nurses." Employers, educators, unions, regulatory bodies, practising nurses, and government continue to work together toward solutions and identifying new challenges by sharing perspectives, concerns, and knowledge. Together we have made, and will continue to make, a difference. Thank you. ■

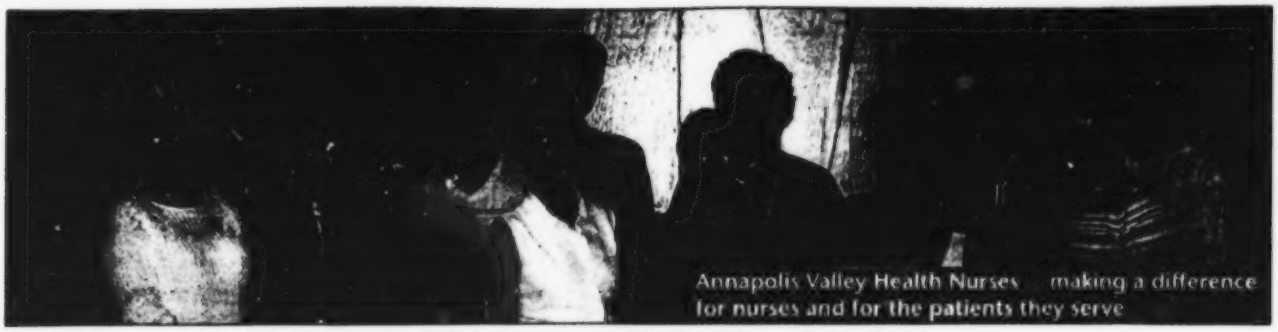
Provincial Nursing Network

Nursing Strategy at Work ...

There were 130 more registered and licensed practical nurses licensed to work in Nova Scotia in 2003 as compared to 2002.

www.gov.ns.ca/health/nursing

... Offering information on nursing grants, bursary programs, co-operative learning opportunities, relocation allowances, educational institutions, and more.



Annapolis Valley Health Nurses making a difference for nurses and for the patients they serve

District Nurse Council, Annapolis Valley Health

By Edith Menzies, Acting Vice President of Acute Care, AVH

The District Nurse Council of Annapolis Valley Health was established in April 2003 to support and advance professional nursing practice throughout the district. The Council, which has 24 members, has RN and LPN representation from all sites and programs across the district.

The District Nurse Council brings nurses together to

- identify and resolve practice issues
- promote opportunities for professional development
- promote safe and healthy workplaces
- support nurses working to their full scope of practice
- develop an effective communication process for district nurses

Empowering Nurses as Leaders

The first major project of the Council was implementing the Practice Environment Collaboration Program (PECP), which is sponsored by the College of Registered Nurses of Nova Scotia (CRNNS) and supported through the Department of Health's Nursing Strategy. By surveying nursing staff within the district, the Council identified key areas of concern for practice and is in the process of planning ways to strengthen practice environments and promote quality care.

First-Year Accomplishments

In its inaugural year the Council has

- provided leadership in developing contingency plans for their respective work areas
- promoted and participated in educational events to enhance nursing professional development
- coordinated Nursing Week activities
- developed policy
- published a quarterly Nursing Newsletter
- helped develop the district's nursing web page

Council Meetings

The Council makes meeting highlights available following each monthly meeting. In addition to regular meetings, council members have made presentations to

- Annapolis Valley Health Executive and Board
- CRNNS Annual Meeting and Conference
- Premier John Hamm

Nursing Strategy Funding

With funding support from the Nursing Strategy, during 2003–2004, 320 RNs and 127 LPNs in Annapolis Valley Health attended workshops and conferences, completed specialty and certification programs, and completed university courses. ■

Nursing Strategy at Work ...

- In 2003–04, the Nursing Strategy's relocation allowance helped 113 nurses from other parts of Canada, the United States, and other countries relocate to work in Nova Scotia.
- The cost associated with the Nursing Strategy Relocation Allowance program for this time period was $396,266.94.
- The majority of nurses relocated from Ontario.
- All nurses who have relocated are RNs. Most learned of the vacancies from the Internet.

Success in Recruiting: 2003–04

Where did relocated nurses come from?		What types of positions are relocated nurses occupying?	
Canada	84	Permanent full time	92
United States	24	Permanent part time	8
Other Countries	5	Temporary full time	9
Total	113	Temporary part time	2
		Unknown	2

www.gov.ns.ca/health/nursing

Nursing Re-Entry Programs

The nursing re-entry programs are important elements in the overall recruitment efforts of the province, and we are seeing success. Thanks to these programs, since 2003, 53 RNs and 38 LPNs have re-entered the workforce.

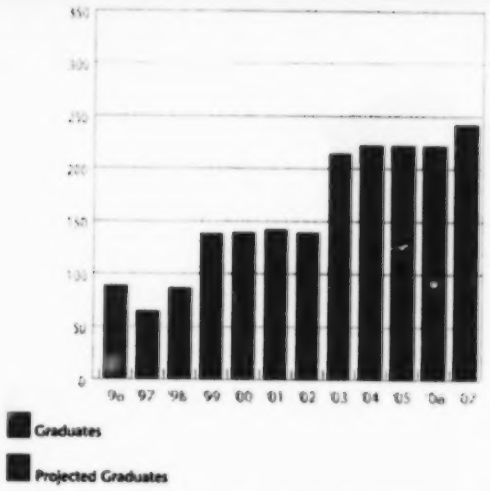
The Nursing Strategy provides partial funding for both RNs and LPNs who wish to re-enter the workforce. Depending on the time absent from the workforce, nurses may be required to complete a re-entry program to make sure that their skills meet standards for licensure.

If you are interested in finding out more about this program, please contact,

Nova Scotia RN Program Coordinator, Re-Entry Program
Lisa Caiger; Ph#: (902) 477-2971

College of Licensed Practical Nurses of Nova Scotia
Ph# (902) 423-8517; toll-free 1-800-718-8517 ■

Retaining Our Graduates



In 2003–04, over 80 per cent of our new graduates stayed in Nova Scotia. Most found full-time employment.

Accelerated Nursing Program: A Student's Perspective

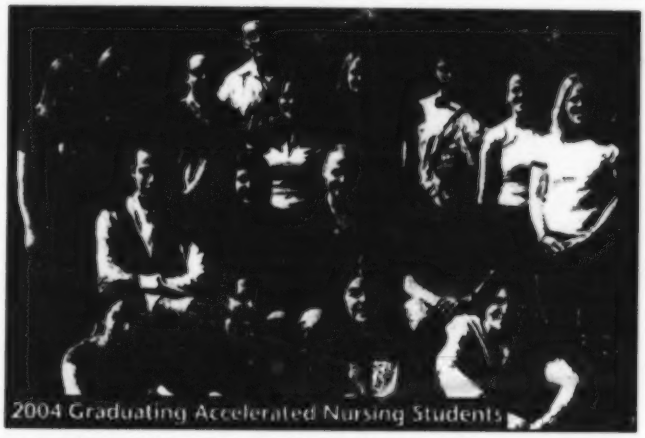
By Shara MacPherson, nursing student, St. FX
Shara will be graduating from the accelerated nursing program at St. FX in December 2004.

Upon graduating from St. FX in 2000, with a BSc in human nutrition, I investigated what I would need to do to become a nurse. I discovered I would need to go back to school, part time, for four years to complete the nursing courses, as they were not set up to offer concurrent nursing courses. I was not interested in being a part-time student for that length of time, so I decided to pursue a BEd at the University of Maine at Fort Kent.

I was still really drawn to the health-care profession and never lost interest in a career in nursing. In late March 2003, I heard Ellie MacFarlane, head of the St. FX nursing department, on the radio talking about the 20-month accelerated nursing program that St. FX would be offering. I went to the nursing department that very day, spoke to Ellie, and applied to the program the next day.

The program is challenging, rewarding, and provides a multitude of opportunities for future nurses. The St. FX nursing program is one of the best schools of nursing in the country and the staff are experienced nurses who are very supportive of our needs as students, nurses, and individuals.

The transition from teaching to nursing was very smooth and was definitely the right decision for me. Not only will I complete my nursing degree within a time frame that suits me, I have developed a very strong support network that includes university and nursing program staff, as well as the unique group of individuals with whom I have had the privilege of studying. I will graduate this December and I believe the nurses coming out of this program are adult learners with unique educational backgrounds who will be a real asset to the nursing profession. ■


2004 Graduating Accelerated Nursing Students

Nursing Strategy at Work ...

"The Nursing Strategy Continuing Education Fund has given me the opportunity to pursue specialized and advanced nursing studies in Nurse Practitioner and Occupational Health. The funding has supported me in facing the unique financial hurdles and challenges of continuing education."

Elaine Gomes RN BScN
Occupational Health Nurse, IWK

Nursing Strategy at Work ...

Since the introduction of the Nursing Strategy, significantly more nurses are employed in permanent versus casual positions.

Rural and Remote Nursing

A working group that focuses on retaining and recruiting nurses for rural and remote areas was formed in 2003. The group has developed and recommended ways to do this and is currently working on a plan to implement those recommendations.

The group is made up of nurse managers and nursing staff from acute care, long term care, and home care within communities across Nova Scotia. ■

"Being from rural long term care makes recruitment of nurses even more difficult. This group of nurses 'jelled' right from the beginning. There was mutual respect for each member's area of practice. I am proud of the work accomplished and to have my name attached to the Rural and Remote Working Group Report."

Betty Matheson
Rural Long Term Care Nurse Administrator
Member of the Rural and Remote Working Group

Nursing Leadership

The Nursing Strategy is focusing on leadership by offering annual leadership development conferences in partnership with other nursing stakeholders.

In April 2004, the second nursing leadership conference, entitled *Into a New Era for Nursing: New Rules, New Roles for Practice,* was held in Dartmouth, Nova Scotia. The conference focused on some critical issues facing nurses in clinical practice, nurse education, and administration throughout the health care system.

Feedback made it clear that this forum is making a difference in the way nurses view themselves as we move forward in this new era. ■

IWK Benefits from Nursing Grants

In the fall of 2003 the IWK received two of the 22 nursing grants awarded to nurses throughout Nova Scotia.

The first grant supported an Education Initiative for Pediatric Home Support Workers. The funding facilitated the development of a partnership between the IWK Health Centre, Nova Scotia Community College, Continuing Care Program Advisory Committee, and Home Care Nova Scotia.

The second grant allowed mental health nursing staff to experience interactive, participatory learning workshops with actors, facilitated by a nursing professor from Dalhousie University. ■

Leadership Conference Feedback

What is the most important thing that will have to change in my own practice?

"I must continually learn new skills and be flexible in how, when, and why my increasing roles and functions are carried out."

"I will no longer tolerate negativity ... when it comes to change. I will embrace the change and encourage others to follow me. It is too easy to engage in negative talk. Praise where praise is due!"

Celebrating Nursing

"The Nursing Strategy Program has enabled veteran nurses such as myself to continue their dreams. As a middle-aged woman I fulfil many roles, wife, mother, daughter, sister, nurse, community volunteer. It could be so easy to set aside personal learning and development. The Nursing Strategy Program has empowered that spirit in me that seeks life long learning. Every course that I have taken has helped me grow, broadened my thinking and refined the care that I offer."

Diane O'Rielly
Clinical Manager, IWK

NOVA SCOTIA
Health